

Knowing of your interest in homeland security issues, I wanted to inform you of recent reports indicating that suspected spies were able to hack into our nation's electric grid and apparently have the capability to shut down this key component of our nation's infrastructure if they desire to do so. While a Department of Homeland Security official stated that our government is "not aware of any disruptions to the power grid caused by deliberate cyber activity," it is deeply concerning that hackers-most likely working on behalf of potentially hostile foreign nations-could expose vulnerabilities in our vital utilities and potentially have a devastating impact on our nation.

In the modern era, computers play a central role in just about every facet of our lives, including our financial system, transportation system, utilities, and military weapons. This new era of technology provides tremendous benefits in our everyday lives, but also clearly brings forth major vulnerabilities to our homeland security and national defense. It is for this reason that I applaud the U.S. Air Force and other services for taking aggressive actions to ensure that our nation's military can achieve dominance in the cyber domain, just as it has achieved dominance in the air, at sea, and on the ground. I also believe it is very important that our nation's counterintelligence and homeland security agencies work alongside businesses in the appropriate fashion to help them prevent, detect, and overcome potentially catastrophic intrusions here at home. We must take this challenge very seriously and address it effectively.